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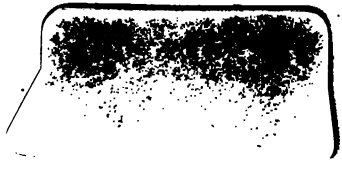

MEDITATIONS

IN SICKNESS AND OLD AGE.

GEORGE ELLERTON, PRINTER,
GOUGH SQUARE.

MEDITATIONS

IN SICKNESS AND OLD AGE.

BY

BAPTIST W. NOEL, M. A.

"*The time of my departure is at hand.*"—2 TIM. iv. 6.

LONDON:

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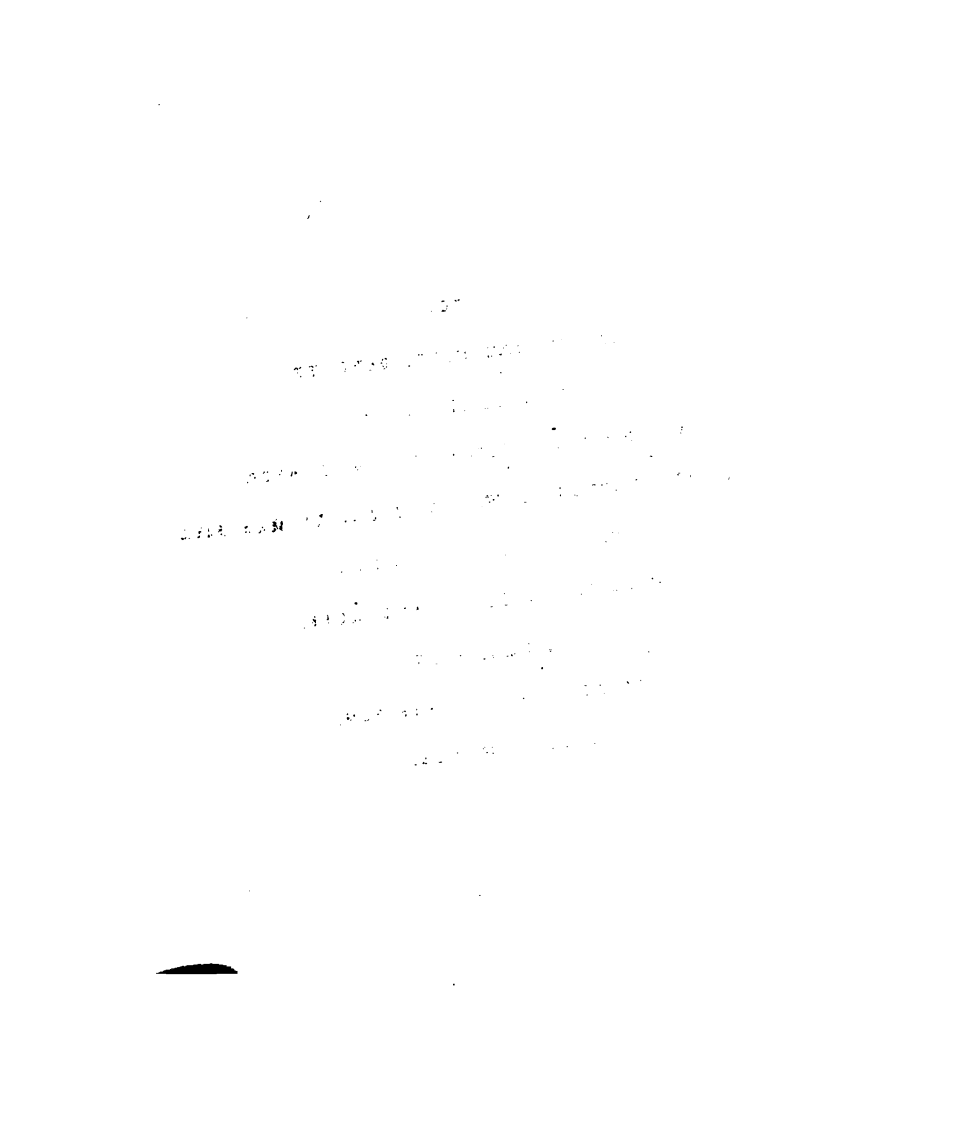

TO

SIR GERARD NOEL, BARONET,

THIS LITTLE BOOK,

ACCOMPANIED WITH A FERVENT PRAYER

THAT THE TRUTHS OF WHICH IT TREATS MAY FILL

THE EVENING OF HIS LIFE

WITH TRANQUILLITY AND HOPE,

IS DEDICATED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE SON,

BAPTIST W. NOEL.

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I.

ON THE FUTURE STATE.

WHITHER am I going? My earthly life is drawing to its close. I am a stranger and a sojourner on earth, as all my fathers were, and my dust will soon mingle with theirs. Whither am I going? Eternal life is before me, or I am about to undergo the sentence of eternal death. Within a short time I shall be raised to angelic glory, or degraded to the doom of devils. The alternative is awful. On the one hand, if I am a child of God, I shall hear the Redeemer say, *Well done, good*

and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world. I shall have *a crown of life;* I shall go to *life eternal;* and be *for ever with the Lord,* where there is *fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore.* Or, on the other hand, if I should still be under the wrath of God, or an unpardoned and unregenerate sinner, I must experience the fulfilment of the following most awful declarations of Scripture:— *He will render to every man according to his deeds. Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.— Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.— He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.—*

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.— Whosoever shall fall upon this Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.—They that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.—And the devil, that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever: and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

What will this end of the ungodly be,

* Rom. ii. 6—9; Matt. xxv. 30; Matt. iii. 12; Matt. xxv. 41; xxi. 44; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Rev. xx. 10—15.

predicted as it is in such frightful terms? What a state of intense misery must be intended, by a lake of fire, by fire unquenchable, by being ground to powder, by everlasting destruction! Are these terms compatible with any remaining happiness, or hope, or fortitude? Must they not, *at least*, signify a state of pain, intolerable, hopeless, and eternal? And for whom? Not for outrageous blasphemers, and for those unusually vicious; but for those who loved not Christ, who were unprofitable, who were like chaff, and who lived to please themselves rather than to serve God. These expressions become more awful still, when we consider that our future condition, determined solely by our character and habits here, will then be fixed. It is eternal life, or eternal death,

upon which we enter at the moment of dissolution. There is no mercy then, to win the sinner's love; there is no grace then to change his heart; but the awful sentence is, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still**.

I deserve all this, because I have been destitute of love to God, notwithstanding innumerable blessings, the gifts of a Being in himself infinitely excellent, and whose goodness passes all thought. And should I be condemned, then, as I shall only add sin to sin, in that place of intolerable suffering and of perfect depravity, my punishment and my guilt will apparently increase together. What a state to be eternal! Eternal! When

* Rev. xxii. 11.

ages, more in number than the minutes which have flown since the morning of creation, and the atoms which form the congregated vapours of a cloudy sky, and the drops in the ocean, and the grains of sand upon the sea-shore, and the leaves on every tree, and the blades of grass in every field, have passed away, they will leave the sinner an inexhaustible duration of suffering behind. The wrath he bears will, alas! be to him, for ever and for ever, *the wrath to come.* Should I come to this ruin, alas, what an insupportable existence! The very thought of its possibility is dreadful. Were it a thousand ages off, the prospect would be terrible. But I am drawing close to Eternity. The time between my childhood and this present moment seems very short, but it is far longer

than the time between the present moment and that in which I shall hear my irrevocable sentence pronounced. I am on the very verge of the unseen world. Am I ready to enter it? Is my eternal happiness secure? If not, I have not a moment to lose. I am in no condition to trifle. Nor will I. By the help of God I will ascertain my state. I will prepare for my great change. If I am a child of God, I will make my calling and election sure: and I will strive to enter in at the strait gate and to lay hold of eternal life, if I am not.

The convinced Sinner's Prayer.

Thou God of glorious majesty,
To Thee, in self-despair, to Thee,
A worm of earth, I cry;
A half-awaken'd child of man,
An heir of endless bliss or pain,
A sinner born to die.

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas, I stand;
Yet how insensible!
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to the heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell!

O God! mine inmost soul convert;
And deeply on my thoughtful heart
Eternal things impress;
Give me to feel their solemn weight,
And tremble on the brink of fate,
And wake to righteousness.

Be this my one great object here,—
With serious industry and fear
To make my calling sure;
Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,
To suffer all thy righteous will,
And to the end endure.

Then, Saviour, then my soul receive,
Transported from this vale, to live
And reign with thee above;
Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,
And hope in full, supreme delight,
And everlasting love.

II.

ON SELF-DECEPTION AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. PSALM cxxxix. 23, 24.

IT is appointed unto men once to die, and after that cometh the judgment. What an awful moment that will be when I stand before my Judge! I owed Him supreme affection, unbounded gratitude, and devoted service; all my time, faculties, property, and influence, were His: and all ought to have been used for his glory. I ought to have

vindicated His honour, maintained the authority of His law, and promoted His cause, throughout my life. And He has seen how I have withheld from him his due. He can mistake nothing, for he knows my thoughts and motives; and he can forget nothing. He will call my whole life into judgment, with the state of my heart throughout it. I can conceal nothing; I can modify nothing. All must be then brought out and judged according to truth. No fancies of mine will be the rule of judgment; nor shall I be judged by the maxims of the world; but the word of God will try all. And by that word I am condemned. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. By the deeds of the law there shall*

*no flesh be justified in his sight**. None, therefore, but believers in Christ are saved. *He that believeth in the Son, hath life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*†. But do I believe? A mere acknowledgment of the truth of Christianity is no influential knowledge of Christian doctrine. A conviction of the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world, is no reception of Christ as a Saviour. To believe in him to the saving of the soul, operates such a change as makes a man a new creature. And therefore Jesus Christ said, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Have I experienced this change, with-

* Gal. iii. 10; Rom. iii. 20. † John iii. 36.

out which I am under the curse, and must remain under it for ever? Dreadful possibility! God forbid that I should be deceived in this matter! Should I find out now that I am no Christian, painful as the discovery might be, there would be time to seek for pardon and salvation through Jesus Christ; but should I die in false security, and find myself to be no Christian, just when the sentence is about to be pronounced which will fix my irrevocable doom, what time will there be then for prayer, or what hope then for mercy? Now, now is the time to know my state, whatever it be. Scripture is the only rule of judgment, because the only revelation of the will of God. If I judge myself now by it, I may not be judged hereafter. By God's help I will find out the whole truth. Am I

a Christian? Am I pardoned? Am I safe? Am I a child of God? Am I an heir of heaven? I will settle these questions, if it be possible. Away from me, all flattery, whether of books or of friends. There is poison in the honey. I do not want to be lulled by a Syren song into hell. I must know the truth. Welcome the books which most penetrate the conscience, and which most discriminate between true and false religion. Welcome the friends (best worthy that name) who will be most faithful to me. Is there pain in the examination of my sinfulness? Is there humiliation in the acknowledgment of it? Welcome both the humiliation and the pain, if they may lead to solid peace, and conduct me eventually to glory! I will diligently compare my state with the

declarations of the Scripture. I will search for the marks of genuine piety laid down there, and see whether I can find them in myself. I will ask the most experienced and pious persons among my friends, to assist me to judge aright. But, above all, Lord God Almighty, do Thou help me to judge. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. Show me my state. Make me to know whether I am a Christian or not. Any pain, any depression, any mental conflict, is better than to be deceived. Make me to know my true state. If I am a Christian, oh make it more clear and certain that I may have the comfort of faith and hope. But if not, then let me know it, that with humiliation and contrition of heart I may, through grace, come to thee, in simple

reliance on the Lord Jesus, to be pardc
renewed, and saved, by thy mercy. G
it, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only I
and Saviour.

Divine Omniscience.

1 Where can we hide, or whither fly,
Lord, to escape thy piercing eye?
With Thee there is not day and night,
But darkness shineth as the light.

2 Where'er we go, whate'er pursue,
Our ways are open to thy view,
Our motives read, our thoughts explor'd,
Our hearts reveal'd to Thee the Lord.

3 Is there throughout all worlds one spot,
One lonely wild, where Thou art not?
The hosts of heaven enjoy thy care,
And those of hell still find Thee there.

4 Awake—asleep—where none intrude—
Or midst the thronging multitude—
In every land—on every sea—
We are surrounded still with Thee.

5 Search us, O God, and know each heart;
With every idol bid us part;
Make us to keep Thy holy ways,
And live to utter forth Thy praise.

III.

CONFESSION OF GUILT AND HELPLESSNESS.

ALMIGHTY GOD, thou hast at length subdued my pride. Weakness and pain have helped reflection. Here, in this sick chamber, where I am called to suffer, and perhaps to die, dependent on the care of others, and scarcely able to do more for myself than a little child, I cannot be any longer proud. But it is not my weakness, so much as my sinfulness, which humbles me. Lord, I am vile. I have wilfully broken thy laws; neglected my duty; and omitted countless opportunities of doing

good. Every act has been defective, and all my affections have been earthly. I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, times without number. I have led others into sin by my conversation and example. In short, my whole life has been made up of transgressions; and my whole nature is defiled. In all this I am the more guilty, because I have been so favoured. Snatched from many dangers, I have been preserved to this day. My wants have been supplied; thou hast given me many hours of enjoyment; I have had many means of grace; I have been taught my duty; I have had innumerable mercies; and yet I have been so great a sinner! Lord, I confess that I deserve eternal death. Justly might I be excluded from thy presence for ever. Nor can I ever merit any thing better.

All I can do, never can meet thy present d
mands, much less make atonement for th
past. I am likewise as weak as I am guilt
How can I change my nature? Left
myself, I should be for ever ungodly; an
therefore I richly deserve to be for ever m
serable. All that I can possibly suffer here,
unspeakably less than is my due. Witho
Christ, I must remain under unpardone
guilt; without the Holy Spirit, I must cont
nue unregenerate; without sovereign merc
I perish. Lord, thou hast an absolute rig
to do with me what thou wilt. But I ca
myself upon thy mercy. Did not Jesus con
to seek and to save that which was los
Then, I am a suitable object for his compa
sion. Did he not invite the heavy laden
come to him? Then he has invited me, f

the sense of my sins oppresses me. It was in Thy name that St. John said, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;* and thou hast brought me to make an unreserved confession of them: wilt thou not therefore forgive? Christ also has said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, and as thou hast in some degree destroyed my pride, making me feel my vileness, so that I do not now resent affronts as I once did and I could receive reproof from a little child; wilt thou not graciously receive me, now that I cast myself on Thy mercy and grace in Christ Jesus, and admit me to all the privileges of thy children?

The Sinner's Prayer.

Shew pity, Lord, O Lord; forgive;
Let a repenting sinner live;
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?

My crimes, though great, do not surpass
The power and glory of Thy grace.
Great God! thy nature hath no bound;
So let thy pard'ning love be found.

Oh wash my soul from ev'ry sin,
And make my guilty conscience clean:
Here, on my heart, the burden lies,
And past offences pain my eyes.

My lips with shame my sins confess
Against thy law, against thy grace:
Lord, should thy judgments grow severe,
I am condemn'd, but Thou art clear.

Should sudden vengence seize my breath,
I must pronounce Thee just, in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well.

Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair.

IV.

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

WHAT a sinner I have been, and am! *My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me.* —*They have gone over my head: as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me*†. I can bear the thought of them: they are enough to sink me into hell. I have no excuse to allege. I have no excellence to oppose

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* Psalm xl. 12. † Psalm xxxviii. 4.

them. I deserve wrath; and cannot cease to deserve it. *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away* *. The best thing which I have ever done is no more fit to be presented to God, than a garment of filthy rags is to appear in the court of a monarch; and my sins, unmitigated by any excellence, are ready, as the tempest drives before it the withered leaf, to hurry me to everlasting ruin. I have nothing of my own to trust to. God has a perfect right to condemn me. I am, if left to myself, lost.

But Jesus came *to seek and to save that which was lost* †. *He himself bore our sins in his own*

* Isai. lxiv. 6. † Luke xix. 10.

body on the tree; He was made sin for us; He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us *. And now, having borne our punishment, *he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them* †. He has, further, invited me to him, saying, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest* ‡: and He has said, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out* §. I believe his word. I have nothing to offer; but he asks nothing. I believe that he will save all who come to him, without money and without price; and I come to him, according to his gracious invitation. I desire His salvation, and not any other. I wish to

* 1 Peter ii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13. † Heb. vii. 25.
‡ Matt. xi. 28. § John vi. 37.

be saved, not merely from the punishment of sin, but also from its power. I love his method of salvation. I wish him to save me by his own merit, and by the renewing grace of his Spirit. I wish from my heart that he may have all the glory of my salvation. Humbly, as a guilty, helpless, and ruined transgressor, I beseech him to save me. And I believe he will: He will secure my pardon, my sanctification, and my glory: He will bring me to his heavenly kingdom, restored to perfection, and blessed with his everlasting love. Will this faith be disappointed? The promise is, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved**. And to what other faith is this promise made? I wish to

* Acts xvi. 31.

be saved in his own way—I desire to be justified and sanctified by Him—I have no other hope whatsoever; and I feel a confident trust in Him. Will he cast me out? Never. Will his mediation fail? Never. *Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid.—In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*

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* Is. xii. 2; xlv. 24.

Christ precious.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

Dear Name! the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding-place,
My never-failing treas'ry, fill'd
With boundless stores of grace!

By Thee my pray'rs acceptance gain,
Although with sin defil'd;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am own'd a child.

Jesus! my Shepherd, Saviour, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then, I would Thy love proclaim
With ev'ry fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy name,
Refresh my soul in death!

The Rock of Ages.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee:
Let the water and the blood
From thy riven side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure,—
Cleanse me from its guilt, and power.

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil the Law's demands.
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling:
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Guilty, plead Thy righteousness;
Vile, I to the Fountain fly:
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
When I see Thy judgment throne;
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

V.

ON THE WORK OF CHRIST.

WELL may the Apostle argue, that, if God has given us Christ, he will with him also freely give us all things*. What gift is comparable to this? God the Son, a man! a suffering man! dying on the cross for me! This is the mystery of godliness, the great manifestation of Divine love, the wonder and joy of eternity. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*†. *—He was wounded for our transgressions,*

* Rom. viii. 32; † 1 Peter ii. 24.

*he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all**. Through death, he has been made of God to us, *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*†. I have *redemption through his blood:* even the forgiveness of sins, adoption into the family of God, a place in heaven, and all spiritual blessings ‡. *All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen* §. Without his sacrifice and mediation, they could neither have been given to me, nor ever have been realised in my experience. *He is the author and finisher of our faith* ‖. It is He who has procured for me the Holy Spirit ¶. Although he has

* Isai. liii. 5, 6. † 1 Cor. i. 3. ‡ Eph. i. 3—12.
§ 2 Cor. i. 20. ‖ Heb. xii. 2. ¶ John xiv. 16; xvi. 7.

ascended into glory, he does not forget me. He has entered heaven for me, as my forerunner*. There he is *head over all things to the church*†. He is *touched with the feeling of our infirmities*‡.—*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.—And he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*§. Sinful as we are, he is not ashamed to call us brethren‖: and after a while he will receive us to himself, that where He is, there we may be also¶.

Besides all this, He is our highest example. I can find in him every opposite grace, in its highest perfection. He is my

* Heb. vi. 20. † Eph. i. 22 ‡ Heb. iv. 15. § 1 John ii. 1; Heb. vii. 25. ‖ Heb. ii. 11. ¶ John xiv. 3.

faultless model *. Especially may I learn from his sufferings, to suffer. I suffer as a sinner, not the thousandth part of what I deserve: but what did He suffer—the innocent for the guilty, the sinless for the sinner, the incarnate Creator for the creature? There indeed was lowliness, patience, and love! Adorable Saviour, can I after this complain?

Thus he is *all in all* †. Without him I can do nothing; with him, all things ‡. He is my *strength and righteousness*; my *hiding-place from the wind*, and my *covert from the tempest*. He is to me *as the rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land* §. What could I desire in a Saviour which is

* 1 Peter ii. 21, &c. † Col. iii. 11. ‡ John xv. 5; Phil. iv. 13.
§ Isai. xlv. 24; xxxii. 2.

not found in Him? What blessing cannot his merit procure? What will not his love bestow? *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* *.

I am no longer my own, but bought with a price. Whether I live, I should live to him; or whether I die, I should die to him; living or dying, I am his: for to this end he both died, and rose, and revived, that he should be Lord both of the dead and living †. Thanks be to him for coming to save a sinner like me! Thanks be to God the Father for his *unspeakable gift!* ‡. *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever* §.

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* Gal. vi. 14. † 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; Rom. xiv. 7, 8.
‡ 2 Cor. ix. 15. § Rev. v. 13.

The Offices of Christ.

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That ever mortals knew,
That ever angels bore:
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set the Saviour forth.

Arrayed in mortal flesh,
Lo, the Great Angel stands,
And holds the promises
And pardons in his hands,
Commissioned from his Father's throne
To make his grace to mortals known.

Great Prophet of our God,
Our tongues would bless thy name:
By Thee the joyful news
Of our salvation came:
The joyful news of sins forgiven,
Of hell subdued, and peace with Heaven.

To this dear Surety's hand
Will we commit our cause:
He answers and fulfils
His Father's broken laws:
Behold our souls at freedom set;
Our Surety paid the dreadful debt.

Jesus, our great High Priest,
Offered his blood, and died;
Our guilty souls require
No sacrifice beside:
His powerful hand did once atone,
And now it pleads before the Throne.

Should all the hosts of death,
And powers of hell unknown,
Put their most dreadful forms
Of rage and mischief on;
His feeble saints will win the day,
Though Death and Hell obstruct the way.

The Cross of Christ.

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Christ worthy of Praise.

1 Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the Throne:
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one:

2 "Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,
"To be exalted thus:"
"Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply,
"For he was slain for us."

3 Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power Divine;
And blessings more than we can give
Be, Lord, for ever thine.

4 Let all that dwell above the sky,
And air, and earth, and seas,
Combine to lift Thy glories high,
And speak Thine endless praise.

5 The whole creation join in one
To bless the sacred name
Of Him that sits upon the Throne,
And to adore the Lamb.

VI.

TESTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Am I a believer in Jesus, and a child of God? My Saviour, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee: thou knowest too that I love thy salvation, and depend on Thee alone for righteousness and strength; earnestly desiring to be saved from the power of sin, no less than from its penalty: since I believe in thee, and love thee, wilt thou not save me? But as the tree is known by its fruits, I desire further to try my faith by its effects. Many, it is to be

feared, come in to the gospel feast, who have not on the wedding garment*. Often the word of God is heard in vain, through the prevailing influence of care, business, and pleasure†. Some hear the Gospel with pleasure, and then, by their defection in a time of temptation, shew that they were never converted by it‡. Some are thought Christians by others when they are not so §. Some think themselves Christians, while they are still unconverted ‖. Some make a great profession of religion, and are secure of their safety, who will find out, when it is to late, that they were destitute of grace ¶. And some there are, who, while still unconverted, so closely resemble Christians, that they are only dis-

* Matt. xxii. 11—13. † Ib. xiii. 7, 22. ‡ Ib. xiii. 5, 6, 20, 21.
§ Rev. iii. 1. ‖ Ib. iii. 17. ¶ Matt. xxv. 1—5.

covered not to have been so by their apostacy*: They may have the tongues of men and angels; they may understand all mysteries and all knowledge; they may have all faith, so that they could remove mountains; they may bestow all their goods to feed the poor, and even give their bodies to be burned for the defence of truth; and yet be no Christians†. They may be enlightened, and taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; and yet be no Christians‡: Like Judas, they may be favoured with the most powerful means of grace; they may be strongly impressed with the truth; they may openly maintain it; they may be reckoned Christians; they may be eminently diligent

* 1 John ii. 19. † 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3. ‡ Heb. vi. 4—6.

and useful; and yet prove unregenerate apostates at last. How, then, do I know that I shall not eventually apostatize? I will examine myself, whether I am in the faith. I will judge myself, that I may not be judged by the Lord. I will bring myself to the test of Scripture.

Christ has said, *he who doeth truth, cometh to the light**. Do I wish my character and conduct to be all viewed in the light of the Scriptures, to alter every thing which is not agreeable to the word of God? Lord, thou knowest that I do.

Christ has said, *whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his*

* John iii. 20, 21.

*glory**. Am I ashamed to own my subjection to Christ, and dependence on him, before scoffers? I am not tried in this thing, and I know myself to be very weak; but I trust, that, through grace, I could confess him amidst the derision of all ungodly men throughout the world.

The Holy Spirit by St. John has said; *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness* †. Do I hate any of my fellow-creatures? Lord, thou knowest that I hate no one.

Our Lord, after describing the unforgiving servant, in the parable, cast into prison till he should pay his debt of ten thousand talents, because he would not be merciful to one

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* Luke ix. 26. † 1 John ii. 9.

who owed him an hundred pence, added, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses* *. Am I unforgiving? Lord, thou knowest that there is no one, who has ever done me wrong, whom I do not from my heart forgive.

St. John writes, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;* and St. James, *The friendship of the world is enmity with God* †. Do I love the world? God knows that I prefer his favour to every earthly interest and pleasure. I am grieved with profane conversation; I dislike the world's dissipating gaieties; and I prefer the society of Christians to every other. I trust, therefore, that I do not love the world.

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* Matt. xviii. 35. † 1 John ii. 15; James iv. 4.

The word of God declares, *the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.—They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.—They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. To be carnally-minded is death.—If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*.*

* Gal. v. 19—24; Rom. viii. 5, 6, 13; 1 John iv. 13.

The indulgence, then, of wrong tempers, no less than the love of criminal excesses, would mark me to be no child of God. Sometimes, alas! I fall into impatience, and betray irritability; but, so far from allowing it, I condemn myself on this account, and earnestly desire the grace of God, that I may more successfully strive against all the dispositions which He condemns, and cultivate all the tempers and affections which He loves.

Again: I read in the Scriptures; *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.— We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren: He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death* *.

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* John xiii. 35; 1 John iii. 10, 17, 19.

Do I love Christians? Do I most love those who most love God? Am I kind to them? If I knew a child of God to be in want, would I cheerfully and affectionately relieve him? In every grace I am sinfully defective; yet I can answer, Yes. Every one who appears to fear and love God, is dear to my heart. I love their society; I am interested in their welfare; I wish to see them happy; I take pleasure in relieving their wants.

Again, Christ has said, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it**.

* Matt. xvi. 24; xiii. 45, 46.

Now, although I am far from that degree of spirituality which I ought to have, yet I am conscious that nothing is so dear to me as the favour of God: no earthly blessings appear to me so valuable as grace, and I would willingly sacrifice any present good to obtain heaven.

Lastly, I find, that to allow myself to live in known sin, and to set myself in any evil way, would be a sign of an unregenerate state. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. He that committeth sin, is of the devil. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin. In this the children of God are manifest, and the*

*children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God**. But I do not allow myself in known sin, nor do I willingly hide from myself any part of the revealed will of God. My defects are deplorable: my sins are many: I have to say, daily, *enter not into judgment with thy servant.* But God knows that I wish from my heart to keep all his statutes always, and to love and serve him with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, for ever and ever.

I bless and praise thee, most gracious God, for these marks of a renewed state, by which I know that thou hast, in thy mercy to me, a lost sinner, brought me out of darkness into

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* 1 John ii. 4; iii. 6, 8, 10.

light, and rescuing me from the powe
Satan, hast made me thy child, through Je
Christ. May these proofs become daily n
clear and certain, to the praise of the glor
thy grace!

VII.

LOVE TO GOD A PROOF OF ADOPTION.

O God, thou knowest that I love thee. Thy mercy to me, a sinner, thy innumerable bounties through my whole life, thy patience with my follies, faults, and sins, thy compassion in giving thy Son to die for me, thy gracious invitations and promises, have conquered my natural alienation, and made me love thee. I delight in thee. I thirst after thee. It affords me the highest joy to meditate on thy perfections. I love thy presence. It is sweet to pray to thee, to praise

thee, and to feel thee near me. I love whatever thou lovest. I love my Saviour. To think of his humiliation and his sufferings, the proofs of a love which passeth knowledge, melts my heart; while his power and glory sometimes fill me with triumphant exultation. I love thy Law, which I feel to be in every part holy, wise, and good. I love too thine ordinances. Were I permitted by thy providence, I should go to the house of prayer with gladness: to join the congregation in prayer, to unite with them in singing thy praises, to hear thy word preached, and to receive with them the Supper of the Lord, would be very pleasant to me: and while I am confined to this comparative solitude, I love to read thy word and to meditate upon it: its precepts are very sacred,

and its promises very sweet, to me. I do not, as I once did, find prayer to be irksome; but, on the contrary, it is my life. Though I have not as much power of thought as I had in health, yet thou knowest how often in the day my thoughts turn to Thee, and how sweet I find it to place myself under Thy parental care. I love too thy people. All in whom I see the image of Christ are dear to me: they are my chosen friends; when I am not alone with thee, I wish to be ever in their society; I sympathize in their distresses, and I rejoice in their happiness. Lastly, I love the thought of heaven. To be holy as thou art holy, to be with thy saints, to serve thee without sin, to love thee with a perfect love, to see thy glory, to do thy will, to enjoy thy favour, seems to me

perfect bliss. And since Thou wilt have thy highest glory from this world, and thy church will have its complete felicity, when my Lord and Saviour comes again, I love the thought of his second advent, and humbly desire to be one of those who may then triumph in his glory.

Now, since thou hast made me love thine attributes, thy law, thy promises, thy precepts, thy people, thy presence, and thyself, hast thou not made me thy child? am I not under the leading of thy Spirit? The carnal mind is enmity against thee *; how can I love thee as I do, and be yet unregenerate? No: I believe that thou hast made me a new creature; and wilt thou let that work decay?

* Rom. viii. 7.

Thou hast given me to Christ; and wilt thou let any whom thou hast given to him, finally perish? Thou hast drawn my heart to love thee; and wilt thou not admit me where all love thee? and wilt thou not let me delight myself in thee for ever? and is not my love to thee a proof that thou lovest me, and wilt therefore make me happy with thee in heaven? I know, from thy goodness, that it must be so, and thy word confirms my expectation. *All things work together for good to them that love God.* The Lord hath promised *a crown of life to them that love him. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him**.

* Rom. viii. 28; James i. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Cor. ii. 9.

his love which I feel to thee, is the earnest f heaven. I shall love thee for ever; thou ilt never let me be alienated again; and hou wilt never cease to bless those who love hee. Blessing, and honour, and glory, be o Thee for ever.

On Love to God.

Happy the heart where graces reign,
Where love inspires the breast!
Love is the brightest of the train,
And strengthens all the rest.

Knowledge, alas! 'tis all in vain;
And all in vain our fear:
Our stubborn sins will fight and reign,
If love be absent there.

'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet
In swift obedience move;
The devils know, and tremble too,
But Satan cannot love.

This is the grace that lives and sings
When faith and hope shall cease;
'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings
In the sweet realms of bliss.

VIII.

OBEDIENCE A PROOF OF ADOPTION.

My religious affections, and my whole conduct, are so imperfect as to fill me with shame. Every day condemns me. I have never known thee, O God, as I ought to have done. I have never loved thee with half the admiration, gratitude, and delight, which I owed thee. And all my services have been proportionably mean and defective. At this moment Christ is my only hope. I can only make mention of his righteousness. Apart from him I deserve still, not

only for past sins, but for my present defects, thine eternal displeasure. Still hast thou wrought in me a vast change; which is a proof that in thy Divine mercy thou hast made me one of thy children, and received thy prodigal back again to thy paternal favour. *The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**. But thy grace has made me subject to it. I love thy law. All its commands seem to me holy, just, and good. I do not wish to be excused from exact obedience to it all, but, on the contrary, to have grace that I may obey it. I do not know of any sinful habit which I indulge; and I wish thee to discover to me any thing in my temper or

* Rom. viii. 7.

conduct, hitherto unknown to me, which is contrary to thy will, that I may alter it. By thy grace, I do not allow myself in known sin. Thy declared will is my only rule of action. And I obey thee, not more because I fear thy anger, than because I love thy ways. I love to please thee, to be conformed to thee, to honour thee, to give thee thy due, and to testify my gratitude and my subjection to thee. I do not obey thee as a slave, dreading the scourge, but as a child, loving thy paternal government. And I wish from my heart to obey thy whole law, with increasing energy and affection for ever. What but thy grace can have made me do this? The carnal mind is not subject to thy law, nor can be. Is not this subjection, defective and unworthy as it is, a proof that

thou hast made me thy child? It is a proof of my love; for Christ said: *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.—Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you**. And thy word declares, *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.—Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him*†.

Hence, I humbly trust that I know thee, and love thee; that thou dost own me as a disciple of Christ; dost dwell within me; and wilt therefore bring me into thy presence in heaven. Transgressors, indeed, thou wilt cast out; for Christ has declared, *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not*

* John xiv. 21; xv. 14. † 1 John v. 3; ii. 3; iii. 24.

*prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity**. But since thou hast made me pay thee a willing and affectionate, though a very imperfect, obedience, thou wilt never reject me. I am going to that world where all obey thee perfectly. In a measure thou hast made me meet for that world, because I delight in obeying thee, and feel that to obey thee perfectly would be perfect happiness. Wilt thou not, then, satisfy the desires which thy grace has created, and admit me to that heavenly life in which thou hast taught me to delight? O my God, I know thou wilt.

* Matt. vii. 22, 23.

On the Work of the Holy Spirit.

God of all grace, my latest breath
To thee shall glory give;
For, when I slept the sleep of death,
Thy Spirit bade me live.

No more I blindly wander on
In folly and in sin;
His truth upon my path has shone,
And He has shone within.

He made my bold rebellion cease,
He did my heart constrain;
Else laws, and threats, and promises
Had urged me still in vain.

And as he gave converting grace,
'Tis He who helps me still
Daily my Saviour's steps to trace,
And keep thy holy will.

Wilt thou then leave me, Heavenly Guide,
And not unto the end
(Through Him who once was crucified)
My feeble soul defend?

Oh no! the words of promise given
For ever sure remain;
And I shall reach my home in heaven,
And I with Christ shall reign.

IX.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and no afraid. Isai. xii. 2.

It is awful to stand on the brink of eter I shall be very soon past fear, or past ho I shall be in heaven, or in hell! What alternative? The moment is coming, an have trembled at it. Shall I get safe heaven? So criminal, so ignorant, so we and so much tempted, shall I be at saved? *Behold! God is my salvation: I trust, and not be afraid.* I might well desp

if I had in any way to save myself, but God has engaged to save me. I needed an atonement for my load of guilt, and He has provided it, by sending his Son to die for me. I needed the pardon of my sins, and He has pardoned freely. I needed the conversion of my heart, and in place of the stony heart He has given me a heart of flesh. Dead in trespasses and sins, I required to be born again, and He has regenerated me by his Holy Spirit. Astonishing grace to me a sinner!

And now, having done all this, he will assuredly save me to the end. I am, it is true, weak, ignorant, and sinful; liable to temptation, and exposed to sorrow. Evil abounds in the world; Satan is a malignant and powerful enemy; I see many Christians keenly suffer, many more fall into sin, and

some professors altogether apostatize. All this, if viewed alone, would be discouraging. Shall not I, too, backslide and fall away, and after much suffering sink into eternal death? Thanks be to God, I do not dread it; for He is my salvation, and will let me want nothing that is good. If I need spiritual understanding, by which I may obtain clearer and more extensive views of Divine truths, it is the gracious office of the Spirit to enlighten me*: if I need, in my weakness, pain, and depression of spirits, much spiritual consolation, He is the promised Comforter†: if I have to resist every evil thought and temper, He can make me more than a conqueror over them: if I ought to be more

* John xiv. 26; Eph. i. 17—19; iii. 14—20.
† John xiv. 16; xvi. 7.

holy, He can sanctify me wholly*: if I want to love God far more than I have ever done, He sheds abroad the love of God in the heart†: if, without being kept by grace, I should after all perish, all believers are kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation‡. All the attributes of God concur to secure my present and eternal welfare. He loves me, for the sake of Christ, who has taken me under his care, and intercedes for me. Hence He will provide for me, defend me, teach me, comfort me, guide me, sanctify me, preserve me, and refuse me nothing which is good. He is just, and all the blessings which he grants to me are only the honour which is due to my Mediator and

* Eph. v. 25—27; 1 Thess. v. 23; Jude 24, 25.
† Rom. v. 5. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 5.

Redeemer. He is holy, and must take pleasure in making his children holy too; He is true, and will fulfil all his promises; He is faithful, and will never leave me nor forsake me; He is beneficent, and loves to enrich his dependent children; He is wise, and knows all the best means to make me holy and happy; He is Almighty, and can do all things for me; and He is unchangeable, so that He can never cease thus to love and bless me. Not to trust him would be ungrateful and unbelieving. I will trust. What is to come upon me I know not; my health and strength fail; I must expect that my natural spirits should be depressed by my infirmities; and I know not what pain or sorrow may attend my passage to the grave; but I can look off from all these

things to God. I am in his hands, that is enough. He knows all; he can, and he will, save me. Nay, I need not look off from them: I will hide from myself nothing that may happen. I may never recover from this sickness—I may suffer much pain—I may perceive my faculties begin to fail—I may be scarcely able to read, pray, or think—I may have pecuniary difficulties. Other trials too may be in reserve; and I may be tempted to fretfulness and doubt: but through all He is able to uphold me. If he loves me, and I know he does, then he will give me nothing evil, and he will refuse me nothing good. Then, further, what can take away his love? *I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height,*

nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.—Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid.

The Power of Grace.

1 Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come:
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me;
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures;

5 And when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
A life of joy and peace.

X.

HEAVEN A PLACE OF REST.

THE remainder of my life will probably be disturbed by infirmity and pain, and in my state I can do little for others; but it is very pleasant to think of my rest in Heaven. That I shall reach it, blessed be God, I do not doubt. *Whom he has justified, them he also has glorified;* and I know that I am justified, because I believe on Christ with all my heart and soul, loving his whole salvation, and relying on him to accomplish it for me*.

* Rom. viii. 30.

The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and shall preserve me to his heavenly kingdom *. I have washed my robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and therefore I shall be before the throne of God, to serve him for ever †. In his presence there remains a glorious rest for his people ‡. Blessed be God, I shall soon enter upon it. And the terms in which God the Spirit has been pleased to describe it, are exceedingly consolatory to me in my weakness:

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.—They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall

* 2 Tim. iv. 18. † Rev. vii. 14—15. ‡ Heb. iv. 9; 2 Thess. 1—7.

the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away—and there shall be no more curse.* In that blessed place to which I am going, there is no more labour. I shall have no more hard conflicts to master my passions, to bend my impetuous will, to conquer my faults, to subdue my pride, and to extinguish my worldliness; I shall be called no more to anxious vigilance, and painful self-denial. I shall rest from all strife with bad men: I shall never again be called to

* Rev. xiv. 13; vii. 16, 17; xxi. 4; xxii. 3.

struggle against want; and if I shall be occupied with duties, I shall not be oppressed by them.

In that blessed place there is no more thirst. Now I am tempted to a thousand useless, if not injurious, desires. I find myself desiring knowledge, money, health, ease, and distinction; but, there, all thirst of this kind will be lost in the superior blessings I enjoy: I shall have fulness of joy; I shall be satisfied. There also I shall lose all sorrow: now I grieve myself and others; I see much distress, vice, and ungodliness around me; I am myself weak and sinful; and at some moments sorrow seems to obtain a complete mastery over my soul. My weakness; the decay of my faculties; the uselessness of my life, which is burden-

some to me and to others; and the gloom of the passage to the grave, much harass me. But God will wipe away all tears there: all sorrow must be left below.

Finally, there is no curse there: the consequences of sin all having been met and reversed, no evil of any kind remains to intercept the joy of God's redeemed people. I shall never be chastened more. Death, sickness, bereavement, and all that now humbles, wounds, or agitates me, will have passed away. Blessed rest! I shall soon enjoy it. And as for this frail body, that will rest too in the grave, which has few terrors to the child of God; and, thanks be to God! it has few to me.

The Hope of Heaven.

When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.

Should Earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurl'd,
Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning World.

Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall,
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all!

There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of sorrow roll
Across my peaceful breast.

Heaven.

Who are these in bright array—
  This innumerable throng
Round the Throne, through night and day
  Hymning their triumphant song,
" Worthy is the Lamb, once slain,
  Blessing, honour, glory, power,
Wisdom, riches, to obtain,
  New dominion, every hour?"

These through fiery trials trod—
  These from great affliction came—
Now before the throne of God,
  Seal'd with his Almighty Name,
Clad in raiment pure and white,
  Victor palms in every hand,
Through their dear Redeemer's might,
  More than conquerors they stand.

Hunger, thirst, disease, unknown,
  On immortal fruits they feed;
Them the Lamb amidst the Throne
  Shall to living fountains lead:

Peace and joy shall banish sighs,
Perfect love dispel all fears,
And for ever from their eyes
God shall wipe away all tears.

XI.

HEAVEN A PLACE WHERE CHRIST IS.

I MUST soon leave those that are dear to me; but it is, to be for ever in the presence of one who is more dear. I am going to Christ, and to God. God has left me no room for doubt. His word is my hope. *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my*

God and your God.—Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.—The Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.—Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.—Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—As for me, I shall behold thy

face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.—For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: wherefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.—For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain: for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better *.

What unspeakable consolation has God given me, with which to go through the valley of the shadow of death! I am glad

* John xiv. 2, 3; xx. 17; xvii. 24; 1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2; Ps. xvii. 15; 2 Cor. v. 1, 6, 8; Phil. i. 21, 23.

to have an eternal mansion in my Heavenly Father's house! I am going to see Him who died for me! He has loved me—suffered for me—saved me—watched over me—and preserved me to this hour: and now he is going to take me to himself. There I shall see his glory. Blessed spirits without number love him, obey him, and adore him. I shall witness their adoration; I shall swell their praise. I shall see how wide his dominions, how absolute his power, and how great his blessedness. I shall see him as he is: I shall know as I am known. All the meaning of these expressions I do not know: but, at least, they assure me I shall comprehend, far better than I can now, his adorable perfections. Beyond all thought He is powerful, wise, and glorious; and yet

so gentle, and so condescending! He has infinite power, but he employs it with equal goodness. He is so holy, that he has a consuming hatred of sin; and yet he has loved sinners with a love which passeth knowledge. He is just, to uphold the law and the rights of God to their full extent; and yet he has shewn mercy to the worst sinners! His wisdom only serves the more to illustrate his patience with those in ignorance and error. He has been provoked beyond all conception, and has been able to forbear, and to forgive. His beneficence has enriched a destitute world; and he is as true to his promises, and as faithful to his people, as he is prompt and liberal in blessing them. His riches are unsearchable. He is the Altogether Lovely. There also I shall understand

and appreciate his excellence; for I shall be like him. Predestined to be conformed to his image, I shall then see this gracious purpose of God accomplished. The gratitude and love with which I now regard him, increased and confirmed by putting off this frail body, will prepare me to contemplate his glory and goodness with unspeakable delight. Such contemplation will assuredly make me more and more like him for ever. How can I see and love, without imitating? And then, the more I resemble Him, the more shall I delight in him. When I awake, I shall be satisfied with his likeness. With him, under his eye and care, loved by him, and never more to be separated from him, I must be rich; I must be happy; I must be safe. And so must

all his people be. And, thus secure, contented, and full of joy, what bliss to praise and love him for it all; and to see that he derives from all his beneficence and love more happiness than he communicates! This must be bliss indeed. Nor have I to wait for it till the great day when he returns to gather together his elect, and to make up his jewels. That, indeed, will be a glorious hour; for then this vile body will be fashioned like to his glorious body: but, before that —even now—in a few more hours—when my body is mouldering in the grave, and my soul is absent from its ruined tenement, I shall be present with the Lord. A few more hours will bring me to this blessedness. A guidance of which I know nothing, but which I can calmly leave to him, will bring

me to his own presence. Even now he is with me. And when will the moment come, in which he will leave me alone? Never! never! To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Blessed be God!

The Antitipation of Heaven.

What sinners value I resign;
Lord, 'tis enough that Thou art mine.
I shall behold Thy blissful face,
And stand complete in righteousness.

This life's a dream, an empty show;
But the bright world to which I go
Hath joys substantial and sincere:
When shall I wake and find me there?

Oh, glorious hour! oh, blest abode!
I shall be near, and like, my God;
And flesh and sin no more controul
The sacred pleasures of the soul.

My flesh shall slumber in the ground,
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;
Then burst the chains, with sweet surprise,
And in my Saviour's image rise!

The Desire of Heaven.

To Jesus, the crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone:
Oh, bear me, ye cherubim, up,
And waft me away to his throne!

My Saviour, whom absent I love,
Whom, not having seen, I adore,
Whose name is exalted above
All glory, dominion, and power,

Dissolve Thou these bonds, that detain
My soul from her portion in Thee;
Oh, strike off this adamant chain,
And make me eternally free!

When that happy era begins;
When array'd in thy glories I shine,
Nor grieve Thee again by my sins,
Whose sorrows redeemed me from mine—

Oh! then shall the vail be removed,
And around me thy brightness be pour'd;
I shall meet Thee, whom absent I lov'd;
I shall see, whom unseen I ador'd!

And then never more shall the fears,
The trials, temptations, and woes,
Which darken this valley of tears,
Intrude on my blissful repose!

Or if yet remember'd above,
Remembrance no sadness shall raise:
They will only be signs of Thy love,
And themes for my wonder and praise.

Thus the stroke, which from sin and from pain
Shall set me eternally free,
Will but strengthen and rivet the chain
Which binds me, my Saviour, to Thee.

XII.

HEAVEN A PLACE OF GLORIOUS BLESSEDNESS.

THE decays of nature somewhat tempt me to impatience. To all my moral infirmities are now added those of an enfeebled body, and a faltering understanding. Much of my time is necessarily spent in the endeavour to alleviate pain, or to arrest the progress of disease. This chamber is now nearly the whole world to me. I am cut off from the active employments of life. My friends, however kind, can do little for me. And I must expect my infirmities to increase, till I

am laid in the grave. But how refreshing it is to think what a contrast the world to which I am going will present to all this! Here, in my sinfulness, I cannot help often displeasing God; *but he is able to present me faultless before his presence, with exceeding joy**. And he will do so: *for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* And *we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him*†.

I shall then be perfect. And if there be satisfaction now in the exercise of right affections, what will be the joy which I shall derive from them, when each is separately perfect, and all are justly harmonised! Here, my bodily infirmities are a constant source of weariness or solicitude: but, the

* Jude 24. † Rom. viii. 29; 1 John iii. 2.

shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.—It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.—And, as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *. Here, I am often tired of my sick chamber; but there, I shall at length *see the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness* †. How fair that world may be, where Christ and his risen and glorified servants meet, I do not know: but if in this fallen world, where the very ground has been cursed for the sake of its guilty tenants, there is yet such exquisite beauty, in those

* Phil. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 42—44, 49. † 2 Pet. iii. 13.

places especially where, under a brilliant sun, mountain and glen, torrent, water-fall, and lake, forest and grove, with flowers and ripening grain, recal to the delighted imagination the very bowers of Paradise, what must be the glory of that world where there shall be no more curse?* And in that pleasant abode what companions! *There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth* †. There, all my Christian friends, whom I loved on earth, will be perfect. I am going to be with those who *walk with Christ in white, for they are worthy* ‡. I am going *to Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly*

* Rev. xxii. 3. † Rev. xxi. 27. ‡ Rev. iii. 4. Heb. xii. 22; Eph. v. 27.

holy, and without blemish *. There, when I have overcome, through grace, *I shall inherit all things* †. There I shall see the face of God. In heaven, where it is said *his servants shall serve him* ‡, I shall be myself busied with the delightful employment, and shall see all others occupied with it too. There, when every want is supplied, every affection well placed, and every faculty employed, what shall I wish for more? *He that cometh to me*

* Rev. iii. 4; Heb. xii. 22; Eph. v. 27. † Rev. xxi. 7.
‡ Rev. xxii. 4.

*shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.—As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. In thy presence is fulness of joy; and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore**.

With a glorified body and perfect mind, amidst companions whom grace has made altogether lovely, in a world contrived by the Almighty in his love to make his sinless children happy, occupied with the most delightful employment, and supplied with all conceivable good, I shall indeed have *the fulness of joy*. Oh! how shall I bless God enough for the exhilarating prospect!

* John vi. 35; Ps. xvii. 15; xvi. 11.

The Heavenly Jerusalem.

1 Jerusalem! our happy home!
Name to us ever dear!
When shall our labours end, and we
Within thy gates appear!

2 There, happier bowers than Eden's bloom;
Nor sin nor sorrow know.
Bless'd seats, through rude and stormy scenes
We onward press to you.

3 Why should we shrink at pain and toil,
Or feel at Death dismay,
With Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day?

4 Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there
Around the Saviour stand:
And soon our friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.

5 Jerusalem! our happy home!
Name to us ever dear!
When shall our labours end, and we
Within thy gates appear!

Longing for Heaven.

Ye Angels, who stand round the throne,
And view my Immanuel's face;
In rapturous songs make Him known,
And tune your high harps to His praise.
He formed you, the spirits ye are,
So happy, so noble, so good.
When others sank down in despair,
Confirm'd by His goodness, ye stood.

Ye Saints, who stand nearer than they,
And cast your bright crowns at His feet.
His grace and his glory display,
And all his rich mercy repeat:
He snatch'd you from hell and the grave;
He ransom'd from death and despair—
For you, He was mighty to save;
Almighty, to bring you safe there.

Oh! when will the moment appear
When I shall unite in your song?
I am weary of lingering here;
And I to your Saviour belong!

I am fetter'd and chain'd up in clay;
I struggle and pant to be free:
I long to be soaring away,
My God and my Saviour to see.

XIII.

HEAVENLY HAPPINESS ETERNAL.

I AM now made sensibly to feel how short our stay is here, and how uncertain our best enjoyments. God has given me many mercies in my life, and I have many comforts round me; but death may soon deprive me of them all. With what irresistible strength he breaks into our abodes; and, when a man is pleasing himself with his lands and houses, his schemes, his friends, and his acquisitions, lays hold of him, and drags him from them all! Human life is indeed, as the Scripture

has described it, *a dream, a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away, a tale that is told;* and we are ourselves the withering grass, the dying leaf, *the chaff that the storm carrieth away**. Some of my friends have been already taken from me; of those that remain, I am able to see but few. Society becomes burdensome; and increasing infirmities begin to warn me that it is time for me to depart. But, if I must leave my earthly possessions, I know that I have in *heaven a better and enduring substance* †. If I must quit my earthly home, I am going to *a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God* ‡. If my earthly house of

* Job vii. 9; xiii. 25; xx. 8; Ps. lxxiii. 20; xc. 5, 6, 9; Is. xl. 6; James iv. 14.

† Heb. x. 34. ‡ Heb. xi. 10.

this tabernacle is dissolved, I have *a building of God; a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens* *. If I must part with earthly riches, *I have treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal* †. No violence can ever deprive me of those blessings; nor can they experience natural decay: for I am promised *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away* ‡. I am going to *everlasting life* §. Everlasting life! When ages of happiness shall have departed, they will only leave me more capable of delighting in the inexhaustible store that remains. Oh! in heaven, I am no more liable to death!

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* 2 Cor. v. 1. † Matt. vi. 20. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 4.
§ Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 15; vi. 40, 47, 51, 54; viii. 51; Rom. vi. 23; 1 John v. 11, 13.

can never come under the curse of God again. No possible combination of events can harm me. I can suffer no loss; I shall be susceptible of no fear. All happiness there, is as substantial as here it is unsatisfying; and as enduring as here it is evanescent. God hath made me immortal, to enter on immortal joys. The lapse of any conceivable duration, will leave me still fresh with immortality, and looking on to an undiminished eternity of joy. Oh! what an end to the life of a transgressor, who deserved eternal death! What inconceivable goodness, that God should have reserved such things for me! Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

XIV.

PRAISE FOR TEMPORAL BLESSINGS.

LORD, thou hast been very gracious to me all my life long. What can I render to thee for all thy benefits? Thou hast preserved me from my infancy: thou hast provided for my wants: thou hast given me many hours of enjoyment: and thou hast saved me from many dangers. Education has opened to me a thousand sources of intellectual gratifications denied to many: I have had the advantages of cultivated society: and I have enjoyed kind friends. Surely goodness and

mercy have followed me all the days of my life. Thou didst number the hairs of my head, and didst order the events of my life, with equal wisdom and goodness, for my advantage. Even the sorrows which I have experienced were intended by Thee for my good: and if they have ever failed to do me good, it has been through my own folly. Praise the Lord, O my soul; and, all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.—And, now that I am come to that stage of my life which is humiliating, and trying to the patience, I have much in my present circumstances for which to be thankful. My sufferings, compared with those which many have passed through, are, I have reason to think, light. What are they,

compared with what I have deserved? what are they, compared with those of my Redeemer? They will not, either, last very long: and while they continue, how much there is to alleviate them. The affectionate attention of my friends gratify my slightest wishes: medical skill is employed, if not to procure me ease, at least to lessen my pain: while many are without food and clothing, I have all that I can desire: and, with gratitude for the past, and confidence for the future, I know that my Heavenly Father will provide for all my wants to the end. Besides all this, I have fresh cause to be patient and thankful, because sickness and infirmity are so excellently calculated to prepare me for my departure. In health and active life, we are apt to shrink from the sudden termination

of the employments and duties in which we take delight. But now, with nothing more to do, and incapable of many enjoyments which I possessed in health, it seems so much less trying to part with life. Sickness, too, fixes my thoughts on the Eternal world; by that very fact preparing me for it. And as I trust the Lord is sanctifying my trials; making me more humble, dependent, submissive, and grateful, than I was before them; they will all, I trust, work together for my good: *for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen* *.

* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

XV.

PRAISE FOR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.

BLESSED *be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ.* How can I sufficiently praise and bless Thee, my Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, my Lord, and my God! Thou hast chosen me in Christ before the foundation of the world: me, who, ever since I have had the use of reason, have only sinned against thee. Thou hast predestinated me unto adoption into thy family; to have all the blessings and privi-

leges of one of thy children. Thou hast given thy Son Jesus Christ to be a sacrifice for my sins, when I could make no atonement for them; thou hast forgiven me freely, through the atonement which thy compassion provided; thou hast given me the revelation of thy will; thou hast led me to read it, and reflect upon it; thou hast multiplied my opportunities of improvement, and my means of grace; I have heard useful ministers; I have seen excellent examples; I have met with valuable books; I have been blessed with Christian friends: and when, in my folly, pride, and ungodliness, I should have wasted all these means, and resisted every motive to godliness, thou hast given me thy Spirit, and thou hast drawn me to Christ. Over-

coming my pride, thou hast made me feel my ruin and my helplessness; beating down my self-righteousness, thou hast made me to rely alone upon the merit and the mediation of Christ; conquering my natural enmity, thou hast brought me, through grace, to love Thee; and whereas, if left to myself, I should still have hated the strictness of thy holy law, it is become my delight. Thou hast made me a new creature in Christ Jesus. Guided and governed by thy blessed Spirit, I have the earnest of heaven: for what is glory, but the continuation and perfection of the work of grace? Thou wilt give me an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and, in the principles and affections already imparted by thy grace, thou hast brought me to some

degree of fitness for its enjoyment. Indeed, having given me Christ, what canst thou withhold? With Him thou dost freely give me all things that are really good. All the promises of the new covenant are mine. Heaven and earth—things to come and things present—health and sickness—life and death—all are mine. Good things come to me enriched with thy blessing; and, when permitted by Thee, and overruled by Thy love, painful things lose their character, and become the means of happiness. Oh, goodness beyond thought, that thou shouldst give all this to a sinner like me! Heaven, instead of hell—eternal life; instead of eternal death—perfection, instead of complete depravity—thy love, instead of thy curse—all good, instead of all evil.

O God, I am poor: I cannot praise thee, or love thee, as thou dost deserve. Come, blessed Spirit, and teach a poor creature to praise and love God. Enlighten the eyes of my understanding, that I may know what is the hope of my calling, and what the riches of the glory of the inheritance thou hast prepared for thy saints. Strengthen me with might in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in my heart, by faith; that I, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with thy saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that every day, and every hour, till I join in the adoration of heaven, I may praise Thee with affectionate and increasing gratitude.

XVI.

THE CHRISTIAN TO BE IMPROVED BY SUFFERING.

I AM prone, in my state of weakness, to several things which I condemn. Sometimes I am fretful at my sufferings, and feeling myself to be only a useless being, burdensome to myself and to others, I am impatient to die. Sometimes, when I am a little more easy, I feel anxious to live: and more frequently I am so occupied with my infirmities, or with the remedies which I am obliged to employ, that I can think of scarcely any thing else. All this is wrong; for in this humiliating

stage of my life I have much to do. We
ness and pain are not only to be endur
but to be improved. They are to m
me more conscious that I am a fee
and helpless creature, in the hands
an omnipotent God, and therefore m
humble, and more dependent: they are
penetrate my mind with a stronger c
viction of the demerit of sin; they are
make me live by faith on the care of G
through Jesus Christ; they are to det
my affections from the things of earth,
to make me think much of eternity; and th
are to break down my self-will, making
like a little child, in the hands of God,—s
missive, docile, and contented to have
will but his. For this he has appoin
them: *For whom the Lord loveth he chasten*

and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth—not for His own pleasure, but, *for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness* *. I will, therefore, with the help of God, try to improve every hour of weakness and suffering. What are my sufferings, compared with what might have been justly inflicted on me? Never may I be impatient again! If I think how much good I may derive from them, this will make them even sweet. If I keep my mind fixed on that spiritual improvement, I shall not fail to secure it. And so this *light affliction, which is but for a moment, will work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* †.

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* Heb. xii. 6, 10. † 2 Cor. iv. 17.

The Sympathy of Christ.

1 With joy we meditate the grace
Of our High Priest above:
His heart o'erflows with tenderness,
And patient, faithful love.

2 Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame:
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same.

3 He, in the days of feeble flesh,
Poured out his cries and tears;
And still, in glory, feels afresh
What every member bears.

4 He 'll never quench the smoking flax,
But raise it to a flame:
The bruised reed He never breaks,
Nor scorns the meanest name.

5 Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and his power:
We shall obtain delivering grace
In each distressing hour.

XVII.

THE CHRISTIAN TO GLORIFY GOD IN SUFFERING.

I AM cut off from all my former employments, and reduced very nearly to inactivity of mind and body: I occasion much trouble to those who kindly nurse me: I am able to do nothing for my fellow-creatures; and I am almost continually in pain: why should I live any longer? Blessed be God, I may still glorify him, if He sees it to be best that I should suffer for some time longer. Those who are on the brink of eternity, often have more influence and authority in what they

say, than those in health. A dying person has no worldly purposes to serve, and must usually be sincere in what he says; and the nearness of death imparts solemnity to his own mind, and to the feelings of those who converse with him. His words have, therefore, weight. I will not neglect this opportunity of doing good. I will exhort my relations, my friends, my servants, and all who come near me, to leave the ways of sin, and to seek the grace of God. I can find motives enough, in my past ungodliness, and in my present peace. God grant, that since, I have lost many an opportunity of serving him when I was in health, my dying counsels and exhortations may be eminently useful. Christians, too, may be edified by my last hours. My active life is probably over; but,

if I cannot do the will of God by active service, I may by patient resignation. To bear trial well, as much manifests the power of grace, as to discharge duty well. May my friends see, in me, how patient, how cheerful, how contented, grace can make a dying sufferer. Let them see how God can fill the heart of a pardoned sinner with hope and joy, with all the pains of dissolution just before him. I have not, as I ought, lived to the Lord; but may other Christians learn by my example what it is to die to him! If, through all the suffering and languor which are yet reserved for me, I can bless him for all that is past, and trust him for all that is to come; if my will is lost in his, so that I can say, as my Redeemer did in Gethsemane, *Not my will, but thine, be done*—if

my friends can see that God is enough to make me happy, though all the outward sources of enjoyment are changed into wearisome, or even excruciating, pain—then will He be glorified in me. Whatever, then, He appoints for me, I may still be useful and happy. I am ready for death; when He sees fit to call me, it will be for me far better to depart, and be with Christ; but while He appoints me to live, I may, by his grace, glorify him no less than by the most active exertions. Should my example teach my dear friends how to die, that will repay them for their kind attention to me. And, though I am reduced to the feebleness of a child, in mind and body, God can bestow upon my spirit a giant's strength, to bear His will and love him for all he does. May he grant it to me, for the sake of his dear Son.

XVIII.

SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD.

WHEN Jesus Christ was on earth, he said to his disciples, My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work *. Blessed be God for giving me some measure of my Saviour's spirit! My will is almost gone. God is so wise and good, that I am sure what He wills is best; and His will has become my will. He has given me his Son; He has given me his Spirit; He has made me his child; and now He will not appoint any

* John iv. 34.

thing which can do me harm. And, if He could do so, how can I a sinner say, *what dost thou?* He has a right to do with me what he pleases. My desert was eternal punishment: instead of which he is about to raise me to immortal glory; and, after that, shall I question his will? Oh, let him do with me what he pleases! Send, Lord, ease or pain, strength or weakness, life or death; protract these sufferings, or terminate them; just as Thou wilt. Thy will be done. All that Thou dost ordain is best. Glorify Thyself in me, whether by my life or by my death, and then receive me to glory.

Happiness of a Christian.

When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet by faith to look above,
And long to fly away.

Sweet to look back, and see my name
In life's fair book set down;
Sweet to look forward, and behold
Eternal joys my own.

Sweet to reflect how grace Divine
My sins on Jesus laid;
Sweet to remember that His blood
My debt of suffering paid.

Sweet in His righteousness to stand,
Which saves from second death;
Sweet to experience, day by day,
His Spirit's quickening breath.

Sweet to look inward, and attend
The whispers of his love;
Sweet to look upward, to the place
Where Jesus pleads above.

Sweet on his faithfulness to rest,
Whose love can never end;
Sweet on his covenant of grace
For all things to depend.

Sweet, in the confidence of faith,
To trust his wise decrees;
Sweet to lie passive in his hands,
And know no will but His.

If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the Fountain be!
What, to derive celestial bliss
Immediately from Thee!

XIX.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

It is not strange, O God, that my thoughts should often turn to Thee; for what is there which may not serve to remind me of thy greatness, or thy goodness? Every thing which I see is thy work: every blessing which I enjoy is the gift of thy bounty: and every event in my life is ordered by thy providence. Whenever I exercise my faculties, they should remind me of thy wisdom, power, and goodness; for they were made by Thee. I can think of no place where Thou art not

present: I can look on nothing, beautiful or great, of which Thou art not the author. Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory: Thou sittest enthroned on the riches of the universe: and thou art as good as thou art great. All creatures spring from thee; and Thou only canst declare thy name to be, I AM *. Self-existent from all eternity, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God †. Thou art the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity ‡. Thou the Eternal God §. Heaven is thy throne, and the earth thy footstool ‖. Thou hast spread out the heavens as a tent to dwell in ¶. All

* Ex. iii. 14. † Ps. xc. 2. ‡ Is. lvii. 15. § Deut. xxxiii. 27.
‖ Is. lxvi. 1. ¶ Is. xl. 22.

nations before Thee are as nothing; and they are counted to thee less than nothing, and vanity *. Thine eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good †. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there: if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee ‡. Behold, the heaven and the heaven of

* Is. xl. 17. † Prov. xv. 3. ‡ Ps. cxxxix.

heavens, cannot contain thee *. Behold, t
hast made the heaven and the earth by
great power and stretched-out arm; a
there is nothing too hard for thee, grea
counsel, and mighty in work: for thine e
are open upon all the ways of the son
men, to give every one according to
ways, Lord God Almighty, which art, a
wast, and art to come †. By thy word w
the heavens made, and all the hosts of th
by the breath of thy mouth. Thou di
speak, and it was done; thou didst c
mand, and it stood fast ‡. Thou saidst,
there be light, and there was light §. A
again, at the appointed time heaven
earth will flee from thy face, and no place

* 2 Chron. vi. 18. † Jer. xxxi. 17—19; Rev. xi. 17
‡ Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. § Gen. i. 3.

found for them *. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? † Thou art as righteous as thou art wise, as good as thou art great. Thy name is Holy ‡. Thou art righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works §. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne ‖: and when thy glorious angels praise thee, it is not only the magnitude of thy empire, thy boundless power, or thy infinite wisdom, which they celebrate; but as they bow before thee, in lowly adoration, they exclaim, Holy! holy! holy! ¶ Nor art thou less merciful than thou art holy. Why else didst thou send Christ? why else

* Rev. xx. 11. † Ex. xv. 11. ‡ Is. lvii. 15. § Ps. cxlv. 17. ‖ Ps. lxxxix. ¶ Is. vi. 3.

are those, who were once sinners, now
glory? Thou art gracious, and full of c
passion; slow to anger, and of great mer
Thou art good to all; and thy tender merc
are over all thy works*. Thou art a j
God, and a Saviour†. Thy thoughts
not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as
ways; for as the heavens are higher t
the earth, so are thy ways higher than
ways, and thy thoughts than our thought
Thou dost delight in mercy §; and thou h
said, *I am the Lord, which exercise lovi
kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the ear
for in these things I delight* ‖. Glory be
God.

* Ps. cxlv. 9, 10. † Is. xlv. 21. ‡ Is. lv. 8, 9.
§ Mic. vii. 18. ‖ Jer. ix. 24.

XX.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

THOU, O Lord God, art the King of all the earth *. Thy dominion is an everlasting dominion; and thy kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. And thou doest according to thy will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay thy hand, or say unto thee, What doest thou? † Sinners are absolutely in thy hands. Thou hast a perfect

* Ps. xlvii. 7. † Dan. iv. 34, 35.

right, in consistency with justice and goodness, to do with them what thou wilt. Thou hast mercy on whom thou wilt have mercy, and leavest whom thou wilt to their obduracy. As the potter has power over the clay, thou mayest elevate the sinner to holiness or happiness; or leave, him in his degradation and wickedness, to utter ruin *. Awful dominion! What if the universe could have been under the absolute power of an unjust or unmerciful autocrat? But it cannot. Thou art King. Thou, before whom saints and seraphs cry out, *Holy! holy! holy!* † and of whom the inspired Apostle said, *God is love* ‡. Thou, who art so holy that thou wouldst let thy Son suffer, rather than that thy hatred of sin should be ques-

* Rom. ix. 18, 21. † Is. vi.; Rev. iv. ‡ 1 John iv. 16.

tioned; and yet so good, that thou wouldst let Him suffer rather than sinners should perish. Thou reignest; and as thy justice secures that all things shall be ordered right, so thy love must effect the largest amount of happiness, on the whole, to thy intelligent creation. Oh, what a joy it is that Thou art King! Nothing is fortuitous; nothing is under the supreme disposal of the evil one. Thy infinite love, wisdom, and power, determine all things. And this must be for ever. Alone, of all beings, Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever *. Thou alone canst say, *I am the Lord; I change not* †. A succession of ages beyond thought will still leave Thee as blessed in thyself, and as rich to bless thy sinless creatures, as thou

* Heb. xiii. 8. † Matt. iii. 6.

upon earth, it is very sweet to think of Thee. My soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches*. To know thee, through thy Son Jesus Christ, is, even in this imperfect state, the means of eternal life†: what will it be to see thy face in righteousness, and wake up in thine imm diate presence? Teach me, and teach thy children, to praise thee. Let thy pe praise thee, O God; yea, let all thy p praise thee. And blessed be thy gl name for ever: and let the whole ea filled with thy glory. Amen! and A

* Ps. lxiii. 5, 6. † John xvii. 3.

The Love of God.

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows;
How beauteous seems thy distant light,
In which admiring saints repose!
Onwards I strive; nor can I be
At rest, until I rest in Thee.

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with Thee my heart to share?
Lord, tear it thence, and reign alone,
Sovereign of every motion there:
Grant me, from earthly idols free,
To find my chief delight in Thee.

Each moment draw from earth away
My heart, that lowly waits thy call;
Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
I am thy life, thy God, thy all:
To know Thee, love Thee, feel Thee nigh,
Be this my everlasting joy!

XXI.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.—ISAIAH XXXVIII. 1.

IT is a solemn thing to die; but I like to think of it. I do not wish to be taken by surprise; and, thanks be to God, death is a conquered enemy. I can imagine myself cold and stiff, wrapped in my shroud, laid in my coffin, and lowered into my grave, without much repugnance. For, indeed, this will not happen unto *me*. I shall be far away with my Saviour; *absent from the body, and present*

with the Lord *. And for this I wish to be thoroughly prepared. In these my last days, I wish to have my mind as much as possible released from earthly cares, that I may get as near to the unseen world as I am able. First, have I done any wrong to any man? If I find that I have, and that I can atone for it, I will do it at once. Is there any one at enmity with me? If there is, I will beg his forgiveness; and I will from my heart give him mine. If any are dependent upon me, I will make for them, at once, the best provision in my power. If there are any benevolent and religious objects to which I ought to contribute, I will aid them according to my means. If I have

* 2 Cor. v. 8.

any debts, they shall be paid at once, as I will owe nothing to any man but affection: and all the arrangements of my property which I shall wish to make when my hour of death comes, I will indicate now. Thus I can employ my short remaining time in preparing for my great approaching change. I feel this to be especially necessary to me, because, in my enfeebled state, business which was formerly light becomes burdensome. I am apt to exaggerate trifles into undue importance, from a nervous irritability which I cannot remove; and I have no longer, as I once had, the power to throw off unpleasant thoughts. I want, therefore, to get rid of earthly care, and make the remainder of my life, as much as I can, a Sabbath, in which I may *give myself to the word*

of God, and to prayer *. Henceforth I wish every one about me to lead my thoughts to heaven and to God. I wish those only to visit me, who will converse with me respecting my duty, my prospects, my eternal home, my Saviour, my God. Those shall ever be most welcome to my sick room, who will speak to me most of Christ. Above all, I wish to be much alone with God. The conversation of Christian friends will sometimes make our hearts burn within us, and their prayers help us to pray; but social prayer is no substitute for private prayer; and no society is like that solitude in which I can say, *I am not alone, for my Father is with me.* Be with me ever, gracious God. Through-

* Acts vi. 4

out my weary day and my wakeful night, be with me; when I enter the valley of the shadow of death, may I still feel Thee near; and then admit me to be with Thee for ever.

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